

**University of Regina Faculty of Social Work  
BSW Field Education Program  
Remote Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The Faculty of Social Work aims to provide practicum students with the opportunity to engage in remote learning during changes in their field placements or circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this document is to guide students, Field Instructors and Field Liaisons through a transition from on-site to remote learning in the case of a student's field placement being disrupted due to pandemic-related circumstance, such as illness, isolation/quarantine, and/or change in service delivery at field agencies (including closure).

**Developing a Remote Learning Plan**

In situations where students are advised by their health care provider, agency, Field Instructor, and/or government (ie. provincial Public Health Order and/or directive from Public Health Services) to not attend their field placement, or if safety concerns warrant a temporary disruption in field placement, students will:

1. immediately consult with their Field Instructor(s) and Field Liaison to confirm the need for a Remote Learning Plan (RLP)
2. in consultation and collaboration with their Field Instructor, develop a remote learning plan that will support the student in achieving the learning outcomes for their practicum course. The Faculty of Social Work will provide students and Field Instructors with suggested alternative learning activities that can be completed off-site in order to support students meeting the learning objectives of the practicum.
3. submit their completed RLP to their Field Liaison within one week of the transition to remote learning (or as otherwise requested by the Field Liaison). The Field Liaison will review the document for completeness and advise the student if it meets program requirements.
4. provide written RLP reports on their hours, learning activities, and identified concerns to their Field Instructor and Field Liaison on a weekly basis.

Remote Learning Plans will vary from student to student, and placement to placement. For some students, they will be transitioning to full-time remote learning for a specific period of time, while others will be engaging in remote learning periodically (eg. on a rotation, or only in their placement settings for a portion of their weekly field hours) and/or as an open-ended plan. RLPs are intended to address short-term field placement disruptions of up to 30 days (or equivalent). If changes in the field placement impact the student's ability to complete regular learning activities for more than 30 days, the Field Liaison and Field Education Coordinator will review the situation to determine next steps to support students in completing their field placement

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requirements.

The remote learning plan will include:

- a clear outline of the learning activities in which the student intends to engage, and how these relate to the student's learning goals, activities, and outcomes as expressed in their original Learning Agreement
- plans for remote supervision, including completion of evaluation forms and meetings (as required). For students who are shifting to full-time remote learning, supervision meetings with their Field Instructor will take place via phone or video call during the remote learning period.
- an estimate of the number of hours which will be spent learning remotely each week

**Reduction of Field Hours**

Students are expected to aim for completing their full hours (230 hours for Practicum I and 470 hours for Practicum II). However, as advised by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education, accredited BSW programs are able to reduce field hours by up to twenty-five percent in situations where pandemic-related factors impact a student's ability to complete their field hours. This policy is applied on a case-by-case basis, and only after consulting with the student's Field Liaison and the BSW Field Education Coordinator. As such, it is expected that Remote Learning Plans aim to have students complete their regular number of field hours each week.

In summary, this document is to be used in the following situations:

- Changes in service delivery format or agency closure due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, outbreak, or safety concerns
- Student becomes symptomatic, is identified as a close contact by Public Health, is awaiting test results, or is otherwise directed to self-isolate by a health care provider or local, regional, or provincial health authority
- Student has underlying health concerns and has been advised by their health care provider to self-isolate
- The Faculty of Social Work advises students to shift to remote learning in practicum

**If you have questions about the impact of the pandemic on your practicum placement, please contact your Field Liaison or the BSW Field Education Coordinator (Erin Beckwell – erin.beckwell@uregina.ca).**

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**Suggested Activities for Remote Learning Plans**

In developing your own learning plan, you may draw upon these ideas that are organized under the five key areas of skill development in field. Additional learning activities are outlined in the document titled, *Remote Learning Opportunities for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Practicum Students*, which will be provided by your Field Liaison.

**1. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

Possible activities include:

- Developing a Remote Learning Plan, including due dates/timelines, for written products to be submitted to your Field Instructor.
- Appropriate and timely use of email, virtual supervision, and communication during uncertain times.

**2. ETHICAL AWARENESS AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES**

Possible activities include:

- Reflecting in writing about how personal experiences, beliefs and identities impact your relationships in field
- Review scholarly and gray literature related to culture and cultural humility and write about how it impacts your work in the agency and how services are delivered (include a bibliography).
- Read the CASW *Code of Ethics* and related professional articles and scholarly articles and write a summary about how the *Code* applies to social work practice.
- Review the history of the CASW *Code of Ethics*. Reflect on how it has evolved to address ethical gaps and concerns. In a written summary, identify specific areas where gaps remain.
- Select a standard in the CASW *Code of Ethics*. Reflect, in writing, on differences or points of tension between the Code and agency policy/procedure and/or services.

**3. ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF PRACTICE**

Possible activities include:

- Research on and write and evaluation of scholarly and professional articles that inform agency's practice.
- Develop focus group questions or survey instruments related to a need in the agency.

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- Develop research questions that emerge from work with the client system and agency setting. Discuss your findings with your practicum supervisor and identify resources that inform (or answer) the research question. Please provide a bibliography.
- Research and write evaluation of articles that inform agency's practice. Please provide a bibliography.
- Continue research pertaining to current projects on which you may be working.
- Develop focus group questions or survey instruments related to a need in the agency.
- Develop research questions that emerge from work with the client system and agency setting. Discuss with practicum supervisor and identify academic references that inform (or answer) your research questions.

**4. COMMUNITY CONTEXT OF PRACTICE**

Possible activities include:

- Research programs and services offered by other agencies who serve the same client population. Create a spread sheet/chart indicating the agencies' names, contact persons and description of the services offered. This will be a Resource Manual that your placement agency can use, especially when making external referrals to other agencies/programs.
- Conduct a literature review on the strengths, challenges and systemic factors impacting the clients and/or client group (i.e., barriers to accessing resources or community supports).
- Explore municipal, provincial and federal policies that (could) impact your placement organization and/or the affected community with which you are working. Write a brief summary of your findings.
- Write a policy brief. Your policy brief may give objective summaries of relevant research, suggest possible policy options, or go even further and argue for particular courses of action.
- Write a letter to an editor about a policy issue impacting your agency. As well, complete an analysis of a political candidate's plans for policy change.

**5. SOCIAL WORK KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Possible Activities include:

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- Attend virtual networking sessions, trainings, and other learning opportunities.
- Complete CASW webinars, available at <https://www.casw-acts.ca/en/webinars>
- Plan and participate in remote meetings, support groups, or other services or programs (as available).
- Complete writing assignment about strategies that promote social justice and human rights considering the agency's mission and practice. Bibliography required
- Create list of ways the agency could advocate for social, economic, environmental justice and human rights in the agency's work.
- Review advocacy agency website that you would like to learn more about and write a summary of how their work could impact the work completed by your agency practice.
- Research a human rights issue of interest and write a summary how human rights organizations are working to address the issue.

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**Remote Learning Plan (RLP) Outline**

Please use the outline below to create your initial RLP and to track your weekly progress. At the end of your remote learning period, your RLP will be placed on your student file with the Faculty of Social Work.

**Section 1: Student and Placement Information**

- Student name and number
- Placement agency name and *full* address
- Field Instructor(s) name(s)

**Section 2: Field Agency Pandemic Response and Restrictions**

- Brief summary of context prompting the development of a RLP (including, as applicable):
  - changes to local, regional, or provincial public health orders
  - changes to the field agency's pandemic-related restrictions and procedures as these impact on-site and remote learning (eg. requirement to work remotely, rotating days/weeks on-site and working remotely, discontinuation of in-person services, etc.)
  - changes to agency's assessment of risk and/or ability to offer a safe field experience, including COVID-19 outbreak or increased level of COVID-related concern in the field agency
  - changes to student's assessment of risk given their health status, as directed or confirmed by their health care provider(s)
  - student has been directed by Public Health Services to self-isolate
  - other pandemic-related context, including changes in COVID-19 prevalence
- Last date on-site in practicum agency (as applicable)
- Date remote learning will start and end (or be reviewed)
- Any other pandemic-related considerations or information, as relevant to the student's field placement

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**Section 3: Learning Plan**

- For *each* competency listed in the Learning Agreement and Practicum Evaluation Form (and in *Appendix A* of this document), describe:
  - how the shift to remote learning will impact on the student's learning activities and outcomes (if no impact or change, indicate this by writing, "learning goals, activities, and outcomes will remain consistent with original Learning Agreement" under the appropriate competency headings); whenever possible, remote learning activities should be consistent with the student's goals as articulated in the original Learning Agreement
  - if remote learning will adversely impact the student's ability to make complete their original learning activities and outcomes, describe any changes and/or identify alternate learning activities and outcomes to meet learning goals
- Describe how access to supervision and support will be impacted by a shift to remote learning (if no impact, please outline regular supervision arrangements), and the plan for supervision and evaluation during the remote learning period.

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**APPENDIX A: BSW FIELD EDUCATION COMPETENCIES**

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the field placement's service delivery system and the ability to work within it.
2. The student demonstrates an understanding of and the ability to use a range of formal and informal resources.
3. The student demonstrates positive use of social work principles, values, ethics and knowledge in professional interactions.
4. The student demonstrates an ability to develop helping relationships, solve problems and communicate effectively in professional interactions.
5. The student demonstrates an ability to make effective use of supervision including the ability to integrate feedback.
6. The student demonstrates an ability to effectively manage the assigned workload and employs effective written communication skills.
7. The student demonstrates an open approach to learning, self-awareness and professional development.

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